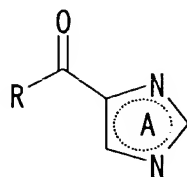


CLAIMS

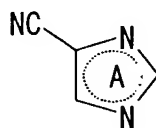
(1) A method for producing a compound of the formula:



(III)

5 wherein R is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group and ring A is an imidazole ring which is optionally substituted further, or a salt thereof, which method comprises reacting a compound of the formula:

10



(I)

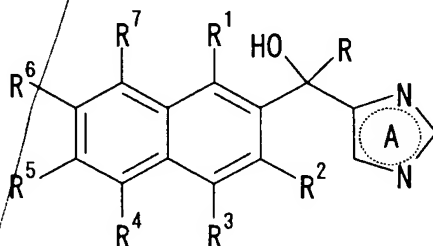
wherein ring A is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and a compound of the formula:



(II)

15 wherein M^1 is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula: $-Mg-Y^1$ (Y^1 is a halogen atom) and R is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and bringing the resulting product into contact with an acid.

20 (2) A method for producing a compound of the formula:



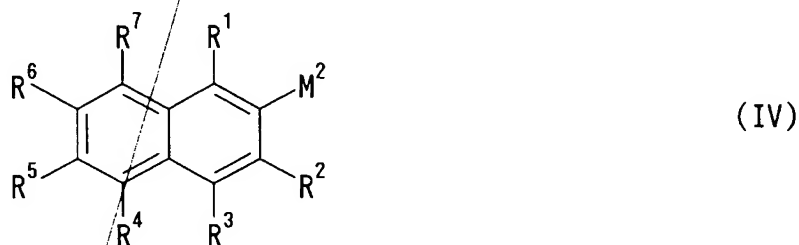
(V)

wherein R is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, ring A is an

imidazole ring which is optionally substituted further, and R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are each independently a hydrogen atom, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted amino group, an acyl group or a halogen atom, or a salt thereof, which method comprises reacting a compound of the formula:

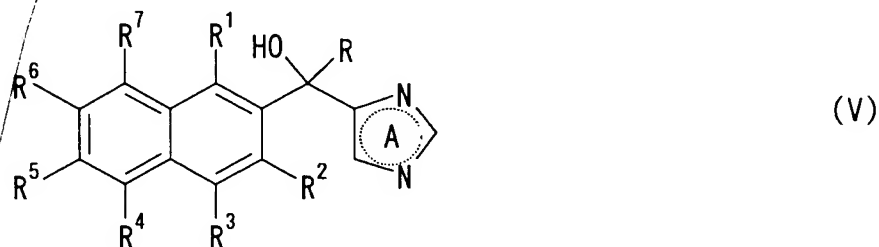


wherein each symbol is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and a compound of the formula:



wherein M^2 is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula: $-Mg-Y^2$ (Y^2 is a halogen atom) and other symbols are as defined above, or a salt thereof.

(3) A method for producing a compound of the formula:



wherein R is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, ring A is an imidazole ring which is optionally substituted further and R^1 ,

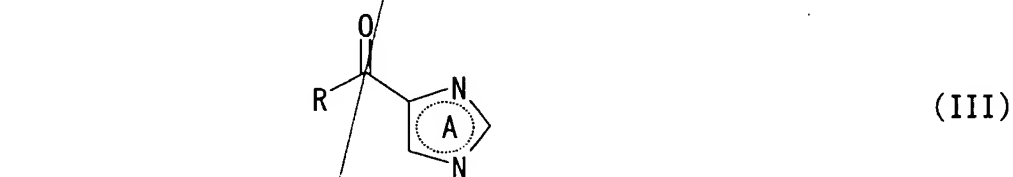
R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 and R^7 are each independently a hydrogen atom, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted amino group, an acyl group or
 5 a halogen atom, or a salt thereof, which method comprises reacting a compound of the formula:



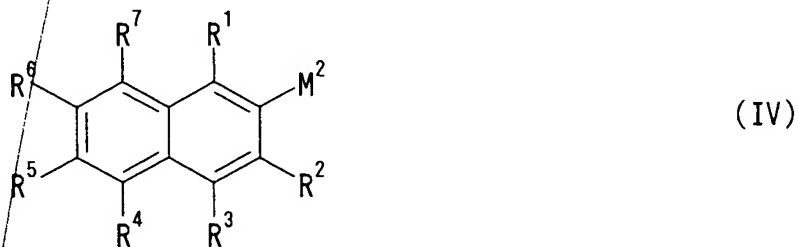
wherein ring A is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and a compound of the formula:



wherein M^1 is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula: $-Mg-Y^1$ (Y^1 is a halogen atom) and R is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and bringing the resulting product into contact with an acid to give a compound of the formula:

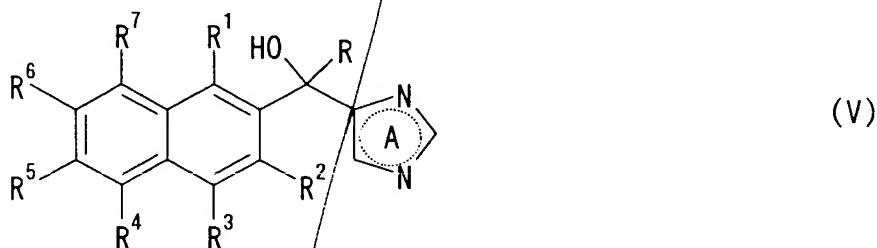


wherein each symbol is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and then reacting this compound and a compound of the formula:



20 wherein M^2 is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula: $-Mg-Y^2$ (Y^2 is a halogen atom) and other symbols are as defined above, or a salt thereof.

(4) A method for producing a compound of the formula:



wherein R is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an
 5 optionally substituted heterocyclic group, ring A is an
 imidazole ring which is optionally substituted further and R¹,
 R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶ and R⁷ are each independently a hydrogen atom,
 an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally
 substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol
 10 group, an optionally substituted amino group, an acyl group or
 a halogen atom, or a salt thereof, which method comprises
 reacting a compound of the formula:



15 wherein ring A is as defined above, or a salt thereof and
 hydroxylamine or a salt thereof, subjecting the resulting
 product to dehydration to give a compound of the formula:

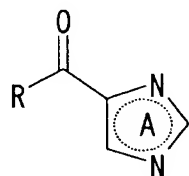


wherein ring A is as defined above, or a salt thereof, reacting
 20 this compound and a compound of the formula:



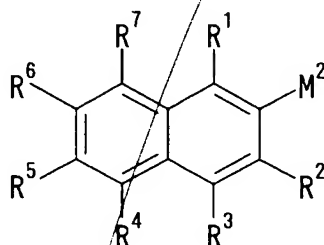
wherein M¹ is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula:
 -Mg-Y¹ (Y¹ is a halogen atom) and R is as defined above, or a
 salt thereof, bringing the resulting product into contact with

an acid to give a compound of the formula:



(III)

wherein each symbol is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and then reacting this compound and a compound of the formula:



(IV)

5

wherein M^2 is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula: $-Mg-Y^2$ (Y^2 is a halogen atom) and other symbols are as defined above, or a salt thereof.

10 (5) The production method described in claim (1), (2), (3) or (4), wherein the ring A of the compounds of the formulas (I), (III), (V) and (VI) is an imidazole ring wherein the 1- or 3-position is optionally protected.

15 (6) The production method described in claim (1), (2), (3) or (4), wherein R is an optionally substituted lower alkyl group, an optionally substituted lower alkenyl group, an optionally substituted cycloalkyl group, an optionally substituted phenyl group or an optionally substituted pyridyl group.

20

(7) The production method described in claim (1), (2), (3) or (4), wherein R is a lower alkenyl group, a cycloalkyl group, a phenyl group, a pyridyl group, or a lower alkyl group optionally substituted by a halogen atom.

25

(8) The production method described in claim (1), (2), (3) or

(4), wherein R is a C₁₋₆ alkyl group.

(9) The production method described in claim (1), (2), (3) or (4), wherein R is an isopropyl group.

5

(10) The production method described in claim (2), (3) or (4), wherein M² is sodium, potassium or a group of the formula:
-Mg-Y² (Y² is a halogen atom).

10 (11) The production method described in claim (1), (3) or (4), wherein the reaction product of a compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof and a compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof is brought into contact with a sulfuric acid.

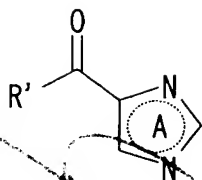
15 (12) The production method described in claim (1), (3) or (4), wherein not less than 3 equivalents of the compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof is used per one equivalent of the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof.

20 (13) The production method described in claim (1), (3) or (4), wherein the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof and the compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof are reacted in tetrahydrofuran.

25 (14) The production method described in claim (1), (3) or (4), wherein the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof and the compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof are reacted in not less than 50 equivalents of a solvent relative to one equivalent of the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof.

30

(15) A compound of the formula:



(IIIa)

wherein R' is an optionally substituted alkyl group having 3 or more carbon atoms, or a salt thereof.

- 5 (16) The compound of claim (15), wherein R' is an optionally substituted branched alkyl group having 3 or more carbon atoms.

(17) 1-(1H-Imidazol-4-yl)-2-methyl-1-propanone or a salt thereof.

10

add
A2